

REMARKS

By this amendment, claim 1 has been amended to make it more clear that by "evacuatable sleeve" the Applicant means one which may be evacuated while worn. Claims 1-3, 5-7, 10-11 and 15-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Ruscito et al. ('501). Among other differences, Ruscito et al. does not teach or suggest an evacuable sleeve. The Examiner argues that this limitation is met at column 4, lines 63-65 of the cited reference, but it is not. Column 4, lines 63-65 simply talk about the way the article of Ruscito is made. In particular:

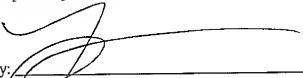
"The casing is pulled down to just below the first vacuum opening of the mandrel and is then sealed at the upper, toe-portion with a sealant tape. A vacuum is then applied via the second vacuum opening to evacuate any air which may be present in the polyvinyl alcohol bag."

There is no port for evacuation, nor can the sleeve of Ruscito be evacuated so that it makes intimate contact with the wearer's skin.

Regarding the Examiner's first drawing objection, claim 13 has been canceled herein. Accordingly, the drawing objection is moot. Regarding the Examiner's second drawing objection, Applicant has amended the specification herein to better describe the reference numbers 402 and 602. The drawings have not been altered.

Based upon the foregoing amendments and comments, Applicant believes all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Questions regarding this application may be directed to the undersigned by telephone, facsimile or electronic mail.

Respectfully submitted,

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